

The Exceptional Vladimir

World Class Gymnastics Coach Now Teaches His Readers

By Willem Meiners

In Vladimir Zaglada you'll find raw talent. A man born to tell his stories. Gifted with everything except an early endorsement by a publisher. Born, raised, and making a stellar career in Soviet Russia, Vladimir was the ultimate professional in world gymnastics. A coach's coach. He led world champions to their success. He was in the center of all things gymnastics when America and the Russians duked it out from one championship to the next. He had no time for writing back in the days. But then again, the fullness of a man's writing is often also measured by the non-writing life he has led. Vladimir served. He served with exceptional people, in often difficult times. It taught him a lot, and it shows in his book.

To fully understand the quality of a writer's writing you have to understand the challenge they have faced. For the longest time there was no such thing as full-time writing. There was bread to be won, mouths to be fed, obligations to be fulfilled. So if, after all that was handled, there still remains time to tell exceptional stories, you are looking at exceptional talent. Times two: because here we have a man who has excelled in his day job, and now he excels in writing about it.

Almost always you are also looking



Photo courtesy of Vladimir Zaglada

at an immensely pleasant and entertaining personality. That's the result of wisdom gained and knowledge processed. Vladimir Zaglada is an outgoing personality, a joy to listen to, a story-teller in the purest sense. No wonder CBS and CNN have pursued him with their cameras.

So here he is, in this newspaper dedicated to him and his talent. I am proud of him. He is an immigrant, like I am. After the Berlin Wall fell and

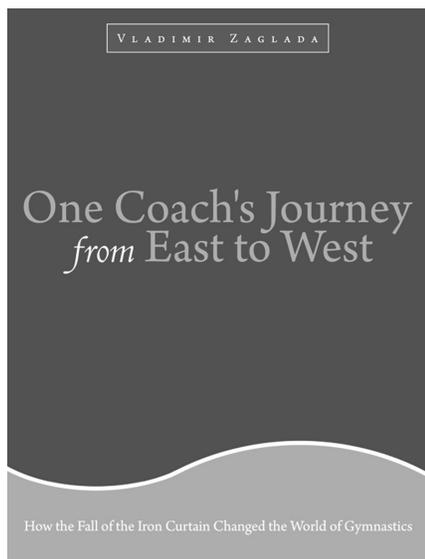
the Soviet Union crumbled, Vladimir came to America, to share his expertise. That makes us glad. Because, now, we can present him to the world.

Read his work. Agree with us on the high level of his abilities. And let us together thank goodness that his work now reaches audiences, worldwide.

*Willem Meiners,
President & CEO of America Star Books*

VLADIMIR ZAGLADA

ONE COACH'S JOURNEY FROM EAST TO WEST



Review by Jaime Polychrones

Until the fall of the Soviet Union, the West and the Communists were engaged not only in a heated arms race but a race for Olympic gold, and Moscow poured tremendous resources into the effort, attracting some of the country's greatest minds. Author Vladimir Zaglada provides a look inside some of the Soviet Union's gymnastics "think tanks," such as the Moscow's Lenin Institute. "One Coach's Journey from East to West" also introduces us to some of the brilliant and colorful figures that have advanced the art of gymnastics and examines how the flood of coaching talent into the West has shifted the "balance of power." The force of this "flood" has been somewhat impeded by cultural and language

barriers, which are also discussed in the book.

"Hot topics" such as the relentless increase in the difficulty level of artistic gymnastics are also discussed and a number of technical issues are covered, complete with illustrations. Zaglada provides a rare look inside the world of Soviet gymnastics at its height and provides information never before published in English. Did the machinery that cranked out Soviet gymnastics champions allow for a happy childhood? Why has the balance of power in gymnastics shifted in America's favor - but will Russia retake the throne? The rigid line between "amateurs" (who are true professionals in almost all senses of the word) and professionals - is the "amateur" in "amateur gymnastics" sacred? Is there an ideal physique for women's gymnastics?

How much of current American coaching practice can be traced back to Soviet sports institutes? Ever heard of the "profile system?" What is the difference between an Arabian, an Onodi, and a Mostepanova? Why a few basic terms are constant sources of confusion. How effective was the system of incentives for Soviet

gymnasts and coaches?

Everything you ever wanted to know about gymnastics and the race to the gold between the West and the Communists is in Vladimir Zaglada's book. "One Coach's Journey From East to West: How the Fall of the Iron Curtain Changed the World of Gymnastics" is an informative, intimate look at the lifestyles of people who come together from two politically diverse parts of the world to participate in an artful sport. Zaglada discusses in length the specific events and players who make up the competitive world of gymnastics.

Gymnastics aside, you'll also get to see inside a country that was hidden from most of the world for decades. Photographs bring the people and places to life, reminding readers that people aren't that different across the globe... except for their commitment to gymnastics, perhaps. It's hard for anyone to compete with the former Soviet Union's expertise and dedication to the art, and Zaglada shows you just how that's true in this unique book. ■

ISBN: 9781456700850

One Coach's Journey
from East to West

VLADIMIR ZAGLADA

GET TO KNOW THE AUTHOR

Vladimir Zaglada

Author of One Coach's Journey from East to West:

How The Fall Of The Iron Curtain Changed The World Of Gymnastics

Q: When did you know you wanted to be an Author?

A: The inspiration to become a writer came to me many years ago. In our family library there has always been a lot of books and I have a sinking heart, so I read both Russian and foreign classics. Such respect for the book and instilled in me by my father. But I began to write much later, and had my first book published in 1977. The published book was devoted to the floor exercise for women. This book already considered among World Publishing Sport Industry as one of the best monograph books about Floor Exercise for Women and still as only one book published in this direction.

Later, I was fortunate enough to write many articles for specialized sports magazines which were published in Russia. Only after working in the USA for almost ten years I decided again to become an author. I wanted to share with readers my own thoughts on the development of the Artistic Gymnastics and some of the great works of my partners and friends from over the World.

Q: Where do you draw your inspiration from?

A: This is excerpt from the book, "Before coming to America I had run a major gymnastics club in Russia and the former Soviet Union, I had traveled the world as a coach, a technical expert and the head of athletic delegations, I had written books on gymnastics and lectured students and coaches, and I had spent more than two years working in Great Britain at the highest level of gymnastics. But the sheer scale of what I saw in America amazed me: hundreds of thousands of gymnastics schools and clubs scattered throughout this huge country forming a powerful educational and training network. And all this was built by people whose talents and selfless efforts helped American gymnastics reach ever greater levels of mastery. What they love in America is Artistic Gymnastics – beautiful and entertaining, whimsical and adventurous, and a source of pleasure and joy...How does the American gymnastics machine work and what accounts for its success? This is something I learned during the American period of my life and work..."

So, after working for about ten years in the United States as a Gymnastics Coach, I had

developed a full understanding of what the major difference was between the American Gymnastics Program and the former Soviet Sport System. I was able to analyze precisely the average level of this sport, which describes how massively developed gymnastics is in the country. Particularly, my new experience and my new positions in the Gymnastics business where I worked for the private clubs played a major role in why I began writing the book.

Q: Favorite topic to write about?

A: Yes, it is the availability of work that became the determining factor in the success of the American economy and culture and served as the real motivation for countless immigrants to come to the U.S. WELCOME TO AMERICA OR COACHES OF THE WORLD UNITE...IN THE U.S.A.!

"What was special about American gymnastics and how was this sport able to develop so rapidly over the course of the last 20 years? Two decades is nothing within the centuries-old history of gymnastics, but this was all that was needed for the United

(Continued on Page 4)

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States of America to build a solid foundation for world-class gymnastics and cultivate its own World and Olympic champions.

In my opinion, it is naïve to think that there is a specific recipe for producing champions and that everything depends on the qualifications of the coach and the talent of the athletes. If a country's goal is to dominate for years or even decades, and not just an instant or a day, it will take more than a single genius to build a national gymnastics program.

American gymnastics needed COLLECTIVE INTERNATIONAL GENIUS and it came together in the United States and found fertile ground there. A key ingredient in the success of contemporary American gymnastics is the multinational character of its coaches. By now hundreds if not thousands of émigré coaches have come to the United States and are successfully teaching. They have breathed innovation and complexity into American gymnastics and instilled in the public a new-found respect for the sport's rigorous professionalism. But most important is the American system of government, which welcomes people from around the world without regard for national origin, ethnicity, or culture. People can speak their native language, practice their own religion, and preserve their national traditions.

Q: One line from your book that best describes the theme?

A: There is a Russian saying: "May the hand that gives prosper."

I have always lived by the principle that it is better to give than to receive. This is why, in offering the American reader a window into the world of gymnastics, I have tried to share my life experience and my professional abilities and skills not just as a resource to provide insight into methodology, but as a practical guide to working with gymnasts at any level.

Q: Any ideas for a new book?

A: Probably, my readers know that after "One Coach's Journey from East to West." I already wrote and published another book "Gymmy the Owl and His Friends: Tales in Rhyme about Animal Kingdom's Natural Gymnasts." I made this interactive book as a poetry book especially for the children and their parents. Comparing to the "One Coach's Journey..." which I am considering as a book of my life in Gymnastics, at this time I tried to talk to kids using a very simple and understandable language and coaching approach. That's why my heroes were Natural Gymnasts from the Animal Kingdom. All the stories about little animals perfectly showing some gymnastics tricks are really funny, but they are very useful as basics knowledge about Artistic Gymnastics and coaching even they were talking in the form of the joke.

But after this book in which I am smiling to the kids presenting them some basics knowledge of Gymnastics School, I am planning to write my new very important book.

Just to let you know that my possible expected audience will be

not just beginners, they can get more detailed information about methods of coaching, gymnastics technique, basics drills, timers and etc. The new book will be even more interactive than my former books. That's the way how I would like to extend a technical part of "One Coach's Journey..." briefly presented in the book as "Hottest topics of Artistic Gymnastics."

Of course, the idea of a new book is already scheduled, and this book could explain in more detail the methodology of development of basic gymnastic elements. Basic skills on uneven bars were briefly described by me earlier. The main thing is that the readers of this book should be the children without any exception, their parents, the young coaches, fitness and other sport's specialists, which sometimes even do not have a direct relationship to the gymnastics.

It is very important that this book will be described as only my American coaching experience in regular, non-elite gymnastics clubs. This book isn't just a short reading for readers of different levels of gymnastics, but also could be the daily Programmed Study Guide throughout the whole gymnastics' base. Due to the fact that a very important discovery in my teaching methods was made in the period of my work in American schools and created by me, programmed interactive outline of the book can be supplemented with a small portraits of the people who inspired me to work very productive during those years.

It is important that during this period, particularly in the last five

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years, I do not work in partnership with the Great (Master & Elite Coaches) and took over the functions of the teachers, which passing their knowledge to the students, coaches and parents. How lucky I was! I met the people I need, who need not only the results of my particular work but also my knowledge and my experience.

It won't surprise my possible readers but among those selected were people of different ages, different professions, and different races. They all shared with me a sincere love for gymnastics and the belief that all people are brothers and sisters, no matter in which country they were born and what language they speak and pray for the God!

I am thinking about the title of the new book and will do my best in order to satisfy my future readers. But comparing to the title of the new book "The Chosen Few..." dedicated to the Legends of the World Gymnastics which we are planning to write and publish with my writing partner from Great Britain Mrs. Elizabeth Booth before Olympic Rio-2016, my own new book probably will be published as a "Chosen Few not from The Greats, but Blessed by God"!

Q: If made into a movie, who should direct it and why?

A: Probably, the best video form will be the Documentary which entitled as just a second part of the book: "How the Fall of the Iron Curtain Changed the World of Gymnastics..." It should be directed by very professional actor

with his leading voice behind the scene. This movie can be a great advertisement for the American Sport in General and particularly for USA Artistic Gymnastics. Someone (means famous actor!) would have to read properly all important excerpts from the book during the time when the movie will be presented and triumphs of the Soviet Sports within decades and final collapse of the USSR! The scenes are supposed to show a huge coach's flood from the former USSR from my hand and some part of the hard work the US immigration department, from another.

Will it be possible to invite to the interview famous former Soviet coaches and athletes working in the USA for more than 25 years. I can give some interesting people who I know very well who can do this job perfectly! Of course, in the case that the movie will be created, I would like to participate in the creation of the movie scenario as a consultant.

I'm pretty sure that a possible film can be created not from the content of the whole book, and from the main motives. The heroes of this movie can and must be people with whom I was fortunate to meet near the end of my coaching career. I will be very happy if one day my American partners and working assistants, my students and athletes will speak to American television screens as the real Heroes of the Big Gymnastics.

I sincerely hope that my readers will like the design of this book. It includes three narrative planes: one devoted to events, one to people, and another to the theory

and practice of gymnastics. A series of portraits take the form of biographical digressions bringing the reader "behind the scenes," so to speak. These portraits are set off with their own font, but are an integral part of this methodological work on gymnastics. To make them as illustrative and meaningful as possible, I have combined biographical information about key figures in the history of gymnastics with recommendations for organizing gymnastics education. At times I even speak on their behalf, sharing their own recollections and even conveying their advice to coaches and gymnasts.

Q: Who do you see as the ideal reader for your book?

A: My readers are all of those who love, know and appreciate the Artistic Gymnastics as a sport which opens a window into the World of Beauty. Professionals can assess the portraits of the Grand Masters World Gymnastics and historians of world sport with pleasure will discover the pages of history of the Soviet sport, which to date have not been described in full.

An excerpt from the book: America did not need "big names" to lend prestige to its country's gymnastics. What it needed was "young, hungry lions," hard workers ready to fully devote themselves to their new jobs. Extensive coaching experience was not necessarily a requirement. What the Americans wanted was real gymnastic professionals who would be able to build programs

(Continued on Page 6)

(Continued from Page 5)

from the ground up and invest them with their own intuition and passion. Who better to fill this role than outstanding athletes, who themselves have known what it feels like to stand on the winner's podium as the flag of their country is raised and their national anthem sounds at the World Championships or Olympic Games.

And America got what it wanted: talented people who were strong and goal-driven, who loved glory and respect in the best sense, and, most important, who had what it takes to win. Back home they had triumphed as athletes. Here in America they learned to win as coaches. Brilliant exhibition performances, appearances on American television and popular talk shows, participation in hundreds of gymnastics camps – this was all peripheral to the real

matter at hand.

In America, our Russians (or rather Russian speakers from throughout the former Soviet Union) achieved outstanding results not because they had a collection of medals and great past achievements, but because they worked hard day in and day out.

Q: What message do you most hope readers will take from your book?

A: "Without the past, there can be no future..."

Probably, it doesn't belong just to me, but I strongly believe that this is truth!

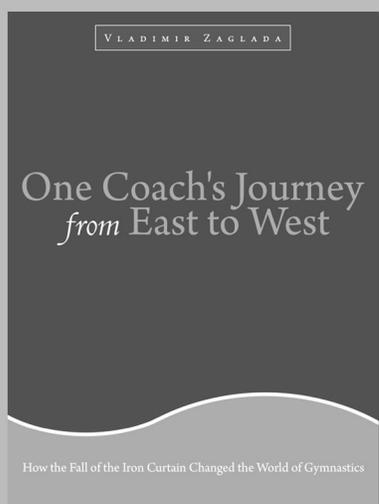
Q: Did you ever experience writers block?

A: I can imagine how it is possible to block the author, and do not envy those who were blocked. But in the case when some authors use illegal behavior, information

and use abusive language, it is necessary to block all of them using the legal methods.

Q: Do you have any advice for other authors?

A: I think that the decision to become an author of non-fiction books can be initiated not from any suggestions and cannot be borrowed from any excerpts even which were made by very famous Greats! It comes from the soul of the future author and can be created from his own thoughts during his own life. The inspiration for writing the book is a purely personal feeling and all I can advise for other authors is to be very careful in the selection of facts and events for their books. And I want to mention something very important: do not be afraid of criticism! Sometimes criticism helps more than laudatory odes smiling friends! ■



One Coach's Journey *from East to West*

VLADIMIR
ZAGLADA

ISBN: 9781456700850

PRAISE FOR THE NOVELS OF AUTHOR HOUSE AUTHOR: VLADIMIR ZAGLADA

“Some of my earliest memories of gymnastics were watching the Soviet gymnasts while at a training camp in Moscow. I was only 7 years old. I watched in awe as these young girls moved like ballerinas yet tumbled like acrobats. I knew instantly that I wanted to perform exactly like them. I loved the beauty and the artistry of their gymnastics. For years I watched films, looking at their technique. I was never going to be a power house gymnast, but I felt that somehow I was born to perform. Watching the Soviet girls and getting to know them as people, friends, I realized that it wasn't about where you were from or what language you spoke, it was simply about the work.”

— Shannon Miller, a 7 time Olympic medalist

“I received your book today. Wow! What an impressive piece of work. Every gymnastics enthusiast - past, present, and future will value your insights on the sport we've dedicated our lives to. I'm truly honored and humbled by your written thoughts about me and Armine. Even as you were publishing this wonderful collection of gymnastics history and information, GAGE has gone through some major changes. But in the end, it has taken us to new heights.”

—Al Fong, an Olympic coach

“The book's undercurrent is Zaglada as a deeply sociable individual who

has befriended many people on his journey through gymnastics. A few unsung heroes get their moment of glory here, including choreographer Yelena Kapitonova, whose name is familiar to me but about whom I've known next to nothing till today. His profiles and discussions of heroes and anti-heroes are punctuated with words coming direct from their mouths, so we hear Elvira Saadi's personal advice for gymnastics coaches, and a long interview with Kapitonova. Zaglada rates both of these women as having reached the very top of their professions. There are also appraisals of the work of Yuri Titov, Viktor Chukarin and Zaglada's own coach during his career as a sports acrobat, Alexei Chernyav.”

—Elizabeth Booth, a British blogger and official Olympic blogger during the 2012 London Olympics

“A very interesting book. Being a witness to many of the events described in the book, surprised their accuracy and beauty of the description. Known Vladimir Zaglada over forty years and very happy for his writing debut. Highly recommend to read this wonderful book!”

—Volodymyr Safronov, a 1976 Olympic silver medalist

“A piece of Art! I've known this man for many years and is a true friend. The book is amazing. If you

are in the gymnastics industry, it is a MUST read”

—Brad McLaren, a leading gymnastics coach at Gymnastix Training Center in Buford, GA

“Everything you ever wanted to know about gymnastics and the race to the gold between the West and the Communists is in Vladimir Zaglada's book. ‘One Coach's Journey From East to West: How the Fall of the Iron Curtain Changed the World of Gymnastics’- is an informative, intimate look at the lifestyles of people who come together from two politically diverse parts of the world to participate in an artful sport. Zaglada discusses in length the specific events and players who make up the competitive world of gymnastics. Gymnastics aside, you'll also get to see inside a country that was hidden from most of the world for decades. Photographs bring the people and places to life, reminding readers that people aren't that different across the globe... except for their commitment to gymnastics, perhaps. It's hard for anyone to compete with the former Soviet Union's expertise and dedication to the art, and Zaglada shows you just how that's true in this unique book.”

—Jaime Polychrones, a book reviewer at America Star Books

(Continued on Page 8)

(Continued from Page 7)

“Vladimir, your new book, *Coach’s Journey* now in both Russian & English is a great accomplishment Vladimir; besides being a great gymnastic history it is very interesting and very well written. ‘Tough Job Well Done!’ my friend.”

—Gary R. Goodson Sr., a National/International Level Women’s Gymnastic Coach from Shawnee, Colorado

“I recently read your book, ‘One Coach’s Journey from East to West,’ and enjoyed it immensely. As a former Level 10 gymnast with great admiration for Soviet gymnastics, I feel that you conveyed the unparalleled achievements of the sport in the USSR and the poignancy of the final unified team at the Atlanta Olympics and the challenges of the sport in the aftermath of the dissolution of the federation. I particularly enjoyed the biographical profiles of the important but lesser-known figures of the Soviet system.”

—Jasmine Davey, a level 10 gymnast

“Hi, My name is Josie Brock, I am in the 7th grade, and I am participating in National History Day. This year’s theme is “A Turning Point in History”. Since I enjoy competing in gymnastics (a rec league), I thought it would be fun to chose a topic pertaining to gymnastics. My topic is ‘How the Fall of the Soviet Union Affected the Sport of Gymnastics.’ If you don’t mind, would you respond to these questions which will greatly help me complete my project? I read, with my mom’s assistance, your book, ‘One Coach’s Journey From East To West’ and it was very interesting. Thank you for your time!”

—Josie Brock, a seventh grade student

“Vladimir Zaglada has had an amazing life and in this book does a great job of sharing his adventures and insights into the world of Gymnastics! There is so much information that it goes rapidly from one subject to another and has many interesting sides to

keep you reading. I thoroughly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the history or future of gymnastics.”

—Ross Brewer, a twice British Champion and twice Commonwealth Games Team Gold medalist

“As a boy gymnast I came to know of many of the people mentioned in the book. Over the years as a gymnastics coach I have even been privileged to meet some of them , having studied in the Soviet Union and Russia. The book is an amazing insight into the development of one of the best gymnastics systems in the world and the people and personalities that were part of it. Once started, it is very difficult to put the book down until the last page. Amazing.”

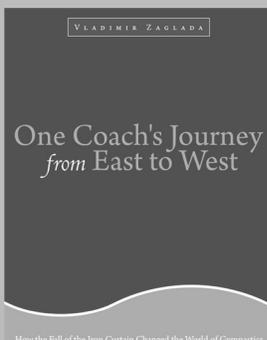
—Keith Richardson, the Director of Coaching at the Dynamo School of Gymnastics UK

“An author dedicated to their work and seeing it succeed.”

—Jackie Velnoskey

One Coach’s Journey *from* East to West

BY VLADIMIR ZAGLADA



Until the fall of the Soviet Union the West and the Communists were engaged not only in a heated arms race but a race for Olympic gold, and Moscow poured tremendous resources into the effort, attracting some of the country's greatest minds. Author Vladimir Zaglada provides a look inside some of the Soviet Union's gymnastics "think tanks," such as the Moscow's Lenin Institute. *One Coach's Journey from East to West* also introduces us to some of the brilliant and colorful figures that have advanced the art of gymnastics and examines how the flood of coaching talent into the West has shifted the "balance of power."

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